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I. *A Letter from Mr. Wm. Smith to Mr. Robert Austen, concerning a Fire-ball, seen in the Air July 22. 1750. communicated to the Royal Society by the Rev. Wm. Stukeley M. D. F. R. S. and Rector of St. George the Martyr, London.*

Read Jan. 10.
1750. YOUR leaving this place somewhat sooner than I expected, prevented my giving you an account of that beautiful phænomenon, that appeared this last summer at this place, and the neighbouring villages, which I told you of. I therefore give you the trouble hereof, that you may, if you think it worth your time, communicate the same to Dr. Stukeley.

On Sunday the 22 of July last about 20 minutes before 9, as near as I can remember, in the evening, as I came from Werrington, two miles north-west of this place, I saw to the left of me (as did two others then in company with me) and seemingly about the height of the sun when about two hours high, a ball of light, bigger than a star of the first magnitude to our appearance; the colour like that of a rocket, when thrown, and in its full glory. It drew a tail of light, to our view about 3 feet and a half long, which was broadest and brightest next the ball, and grew taper in form, and languid in colour, to its termination. Its course was about north-west to south-west. It moved in a direct line horizontally,

horizontally, and its motion thro' the air was little swifter than the passage of a duck, hawk, or pigeon, in their flight.

We had the view of it for about three fourths of a minute; but, being in the road near the north end of Walton, and under the trees, lost sight of it sooner than I desired.

Several people coming from Peterborough, and on the south side of the town coming from Fletton, saw the same, and give the same account of it as I have above done.

I heard it was seen at Bourn, which is north-west 12 miles off us, in the same manner. It must consequently be at a great height from us (tho' it did not seem to be so) by reason people in Borough-Fen, which lies north-east of the place where I was when I saw it, saw the same on the same hand I did, and its form and course in the same manner.

The veracity of this account may be depended on, as many others saw the same, as well as,

Dear Sir,

Peterborough, Dec. 13.

1750.

Your very humble servant,

W. Smith.